



Vol. 2 Issue 01

Inside This Issue

January 2006

Evacuation Plan

Area 3 Coordinator

Town Notes

CT-N and DEMHS

WHAT'S NEW:

January is
National Blood
Donor Month

Happy New Year

UPCOMING TRAINING and EXERCISES

Feb. 1st and Feb. 6th
ICS/UC—Norwalk &
Danbury

February 28
Exercise Planning
Workshop

Commissioner Notes

By James M. Thomas

The New Year has begun and we continue to work diligently to ensure the safety of the citizens of Connecticut. On the following page you will find an overview of the Evacuation and Shelter Planning that has been ongoing. This is a cooperative effort among various state agencies and entities to afford the citizens of our state a comprehensive plan in case of an emergency. I applaud the dedication of the individuals involved in this very important project.

Also included in this issue you will find some great initiatives by Towns that show how a little planning and a great deal of heart can positively effect the lives of those around us, both before and after an emergency.

Another positive partnership is that of CT-N and DEMHS. This partnership will ensure timely information for any area(s) of Connecticut facing an emergency situation, and will expedite the dissemination of important and possibly life saving instructions for people living in the affected area(s).

I hope you enjoy this issue of the DEMHS Advisor.

EVACUATION AND SHELTERING/MASS CARE PLANNING

In Connecticut, evacuation and sheltering/mass care planning began in early November 2005. At that time, Governor Rell directed DEMHS to work in conjunction with the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Transportation to develop evacuation and mass shelter plans for Connecticut. In addition, the federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has directed all states to develop evacuation and mass shelter plans, and submit them to DHS by no later than January 17, 2006.

At the onset of this planning process it was agreed that Connecticut would not plan for the evacuation of the entire state. Connecticut is approaching evacuation and mass shelter planning at a regional level. DEMHS recently established five new regions across the state to be used for preparedness planning. All 169 municipalities and the two Tribal Nations are included in the regions. DEMHS employs five (5) Area Coordinators who work with local municipalities within each defined region on planning, preparedness and emergency response. Because the new DEMHS regions became effective January 1, 2006, it was agreed that the state would use them, for evacuation and planning purposes.

At the local level, DEMHS Area Coordinators are reviewing each municipality's evacuation and sheltering plans, tabulating local shelter locations and collecting local hazard assessments. They are also collecting data on the "special needs" populations from Emergency Management Directors (EMDs), as well as information on local transportation assets. The Area Coordinators will be assessing whether the local plans are adequate, feasible, and acceptable.

At the regional level, DEMHS has established five Regional Evacuation Planning Teams (REPT), which are comprised of a regional planning organization, transportation planner, a DEMHS regional planner, a representative from local emergency management, fire, police, EMS, the Red Cross, a chief elected official, an advocate for persons with disabilities, and the private sector. Each REPT will be chaired by one of the five DEMHS Area Coordinators. They will conduct a regional hazard analysis; identify all shelter locations in their region along with their capacity; and, identify whether they are long or short term shelters. In many areas of the state, sheltering in place will be the preferred method of safe guarding the public's safety.

State officials have formed a statewide Evacuation and Shelter Planning Committee with representatives from DOT, DPS, the Fire and Police Chief's Associations, as well as police chiefs from each of the five (5) DEMHS planning regions, to determine evacuation routes and traffic management plans. The DEMHS Area Coordinators report to this statewide planning committee on the status of their work at the regional level.

For planning purposes, DEMHS developed three of the most probable worst case scenarios that would require mass evacuations and sheltering. Those include:

- A Category 3 hurricane hitting the Connecticut Coast and all of New England;
- A Millstone Power Plant release of contamination; and,
- A large scale terrorist attack in New York City.

DEMHS is working with the Department of Transportation to develop evacuation routes for each of these scenarios, and the Department of Public Safety is developing a Traffic Management Plan based upon these scenarios. DEMHS is also working with Connecticut's Office of Protection and Advocacy to ensure that the state's disabled community and those with "special needs" are well cared for during an evacuation. Finally, DEMHS is working with the State Animal Rescue Team (SART) to plan for evacuation and safe sheltering of pets.

This DEMHS-led initiative is ongoing. Interagency and intergovernmental collaboration and planning will continue well into 2006. The Concept of Operations Plan that is being developed will include a plan for operations and mutual aid, as well as regional support functions such as: transportation; emergency management; mass care/housing/human services; public health/medical services; and public safety and security.

Office of Emergency Management Area 3 Coordinator

Thomas Gavaghan

Tom is the DEMHS Area Coordinator for the 41 towns in the Greater Hartford area and has served in that role for the past 3 years. Previously he provided training to towns throughout the state on emergency management topics.



Thomas Gavaghan

Tom spent a number of years with the Southern New England Telephone Company and left as Director of Training and Organization Development. He had his own consulting practice for ten years but traveling to clients throughout the country convinced him to spend more time in Connecticut with his family. He subsequently joined the Office of Emergency Management as a trainer.

Currently, DEMHS has been charged with putting together an Evacuation and Sheltering Plan for the state. Tom is working with the area towns to design, with the assistance of their Emergency Managers, an emergency evacuation and sheltering plan for the area. Tom is also working with other State agencies to provide data for the plan which needs to respond to a number of potential incidents. In addition to carrying out his area responsibilities, Tom has a major interest in school emergency planning. He is currently serving on the State Child Safety and Crisis Response Committee that hopes to put into effect a comprehensive emergency approach that all schools could adopt and, under new Federal regulations, be certified as being compliant with them.

Tom is a native of Rochester, New York where he attended the Rochester Institute of Technology. Subsequently, he attended New York University in New York City where he received a B.S. degree in Business Administration. He later earned an MBA degree from the University of Hartford. This background enabled him to teach as an Adjunct Professor at the University of New Haven Graduate School of Business for a number of years.

Tom is married with one daughter and has lived in Guilford for the last 20 years.

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Area III Office
Veterans' Home & Hospital
287 West Street
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Phone: (860) 529-6893
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Town Notes:



LYME & OLD LYME

Cameron Parish Hurricane Relief Effort

The towns of Lyme and Old Lyme have joined in partnership to assist the residents of Cameron Parish, Louisiana with their recovery from the devastation wrought by Hurricane Rita. Cameron Parish, similar to a county, is located in the southwest corner of Louisiana near the Texas border. Its communities include Cameron, Creole, Grand Chenier, Hackberry, Holly Beach, Johnson's Bayou and Oak Grove. The Parish has a population of 10,000 and has 26 miles of beach frontage on the Gulf of Mexico. Although the Parish did not suffer significant damage from Hurricane Katrina, it sustained heavy damage from Hurricane Rita. There was no loss of life, but property damage was massive. Hurricane Rita destroyed 90% of the homes in Cameron, the parish seat. The storm surge totally leveled Holly Beach, the "Cajun Riviera."

In early September, Old Lyme First Selectman Timothy Griswold spearheaded an effort to identify a Gulf Coast community that would benefit from a long-term relationship with Lyme and Old Lyme. A committee was formed consisting of Emergency Management Directors David Roberge (Old Lyme) and Lee Watkins (Lyme), Superintendent of Lyme/Old Lyme Public Schools David Klein, local realtor Christy Laurence, representatives from the local churches, and Leon Just, an active Red Cross volunteer. After several meetings and following telephone conversations with local Louisiana officials, the committee recommended the "adoption" of Cameron Parish. The joint commitment of First Selectmen Tim Griswold (Old Lyme) and William Koch (Lyme) will allow for a coordinated and focused relief effort.

The Town of Lyme is prepared to donate a retired fire truck in an effort to jump-start the relief effort, and pledges have been made to fund the cost of its transportation to Cameron Parish. While the local relief effort collected gift cards, toys and monetary donations in time to spread holiday joy to the people of Cameron Parish the towns are continuing to collect donations. Tax-deductible checks may be made out to the **Cameron Community Action Agency**, and delivered to either Town or mailed to PO Box 8801 Grand Lake, LA. 70607.

All local organizations - schools, PTOs, youth groups, veterans', business, and service organizations - are invited to participate in this long-term community -wide effort. "Our goal is to partner our scouts with scouts in Cameron Parish, our local Chamber with their Cameron counterpart, etc." explains David Roberge. Questions concerning the Lyme/Old Lyme relief effort may be directed to Roberge (434-1605 x 231) or Lee Watkins (434-7733). Con't page 6.



Standing in front of the retired Lyme fire truck being donated to Cameron Parish, La., are (from left to right) realtor Christy Lawrence, Chamber of Commerce President Charles DeLinks, LOL Schools Superintendent David Klein, American Red Cross volunteer Leon Just, Old Lyme First Selectman Tim Griswold, Lyme First Selectman Bill Koch, Old Lyme Director of Emergency Management Services, David Roberge, and Lyme Director of Emergency Management Services, Lee Watkins.

A Thank You Letter from a Resident of Cameron Parish

Published 12/19/05

To The Editor:

My family had the privilege of being on the receiving end of the generous donations from the cities of Lyme and Old Lyme this Saturday morning. We live in Grand Lake, Louisiana, which is in the northern portion of Cameron Parish. Thankfully we were tremendously blessed and still have most of our structures standing. Because we were so blessed, we have been able to put our quiet, little community to good use as the hub of activity since hurricane Rita tore through our parish on September 24th.

My husband is a volunteer fireman, and a member of the Fire Board in Grand Lake. The children of Grand Lake, including my two children, anxiously await the arrival of Santa on the fire truck each year. Although it has been difficult, we have tried to keep some sense of normalcy in the lives of our children. Easily, Santa's traditional fire truck arrival could have been canceled this year. Thankfully, the towns of Lyme and Old Lyme made this year's visit from Santa even more special than it has ever been before.

Cameron Parish's population is small in number but big in heart. We are a group of hard working, self-reliant people. I have heard many of the residents say that they are having trouble with receiving help from others because they are usually on the other side of things, helping those in need without question. I have struggled with that myself. In fact, before Rita tore away at Cameron Parish, our parish had set up a fund called the "It Could Have Been Us Fund" to help out the victims of hurricane Katrina. I don't remember exactly how much was raised but it was a tremendous amount.

Each of the representatives of Lyme and Old Lyme that visited our parish were so friendly that they felt like family. That our parish and your towns, two groups of people who never knew the other existed, have been brought together like this is truly a blessing from God.

Please know that you are welcome in Cameron Parish any time. Our parish's crowning glory is its natural beauty -- abundant wildlife, stately live oak trees, lush vegetation, fruitful lakes, rivers, canals, and bayous, pristine marshes and beautiful fields of rice and sugar cane. We hope that it will not be long before we have our beloved parish standing on her feet again and her natural beauty, which is terribly destroyed at this time, restored.

My own flower garden outside my kitchen window is just a small reflection of how our entire parish has been stripped of its natural beauty by hurricane Rita. My rose bushes, hibiscus, camellias, and other plants are only dead sticks now, a reminder of the salt water that submerged them, as it did our home, and the fierce wind that tore them apart.

When we returned home there were virtually no leaves left on the trees and the plants that had held onto their leaves despite the raging wind, looked like they had been burned by fire. In the weeks after the storm struck it was almost miraculous how quickly much of the plant life regenerated new leaves and some plants that only bloom in the Spring, burst into bloom. It is blessings like the quick regeneration of the nature

I took a couple of pictures of the children as they were receiving their gifts and I am sending them along with this letter. Words cannot properly express our gratitude for the assistance we have received in our time of need. Thank you and please know that we look forward to the future of our relationship with the residents of Lyme and Old Lyme. We are a people who always welcome visitors and enjoy sharing the joie de vivre (joy of life). Thank you, again, and come visit us some time!

Suzanne McFatter
Grand Lake, Louisiana.

Having arrived on the fire truck donated by the Town of Lyme, Santa distributes toys from Lyme and Old Lyme to the children of Cameron Parish on Saturday.



Town Notes:

New Britain, CT



The City of New Britain has developed a new emergency preparedness program designed to provide assistance to the City's special needs population during a crisis. The program is called S.N.A.P. and stands for Special Needs Assistance Program. Beginning in January 2006 the City will be distributing the S.N.A.P flyer in a number of ways to reach as many of the city's residents as possible. These include placing the forms in tax bills, sending the forms home with school children, providing them to out residents discharged from New Britain General Hospital who will be in need of special assistance, giving them to Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and Fire Department personnel, providing them to the Visiting Nurses Association and Senior Center and by reaching out through public education programs presented to the local senior housing complexes. In the near future outreach will also be conducted through the CRIS radio. The information on the form is in English, Polish and Spanish. A limited number of forms will also be available in Braille.

This initiative to support New Britain's special needs population is a partnership with the Office of the Mayor, Timothy Stewart and the New Britain Office of Emergency Management (OEM). New Britain OEM noted that a special thanks goes out to Jim Battaglio and Steve Thal of the Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Committee (CREPC) for their help and guidance in working on this project.

The S.N.A.P. form asks people if they require assistance to leave their home or residence in an emergency. Individuals who answer yes are further asked to explain their particular situation. This includes individuals who may be hearing or sight impaired, have trouble with mobility, breathing difficulty, are oxygen dependent or have other circumstances that may prevent them from being able to independently evacuate their home.

Information provided on this form will be kept strictly confidential and will only be shared with public safety personnel to be used in the event of an emergency. The form can be mailed back to the New Britain Office of Emergency Management or dropped off at several other locations in town including the Visiting Nurses Association, the Senior Center and the New Britain EMS.

"New Britain is a city for all people. The S.N.A.P. program is meant to support that by further enhancing the wellbeing of all persons within our city especially during emergencies," said Mark Carr, New Britain Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director.

CT-N Joins in DEMHS Hurricane Exercises

(Used with permission of CT-N - for more information on CT-N and a full copy of the *Network Vision*, CT-N's newsletter visit www.ct-n.com)

In the Winter 2005 issue of *Network Vision* (vol. III no. 1), we announced the creation of a partnership with the state Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security to make CT-N a public information conduit during a statewide emergency. To recap, in the event of a crisis - whether natural or man-made - an emergency telecast can initiate from the State Armory and go out over CT-N at a moment's notice, any time of the day or night. In the intervening months, our staff oversaw the installation of a miniature control facility in the Emergency Operations Center, and began working out procedures, training and other issues with DEMHS staff. All of this work has been a well-planned prelude, but we knew the time would soon come for us to put our plans into action.

Living on the east coast as we do, emergency preparedness tends to ratchet up a few notches between June and November: the official duration of the Atlantic hurricane season. DEMHS conducts regular drills on a wide variety of emergency scenarios, but this fall their training focused on hurricanes. Given the time of year, an actual hurricane represented the most predictable opportunity for our new communications system to be used, and both organizations agreed that the hurricane exercises represented the perfect opportunity to test the setup.

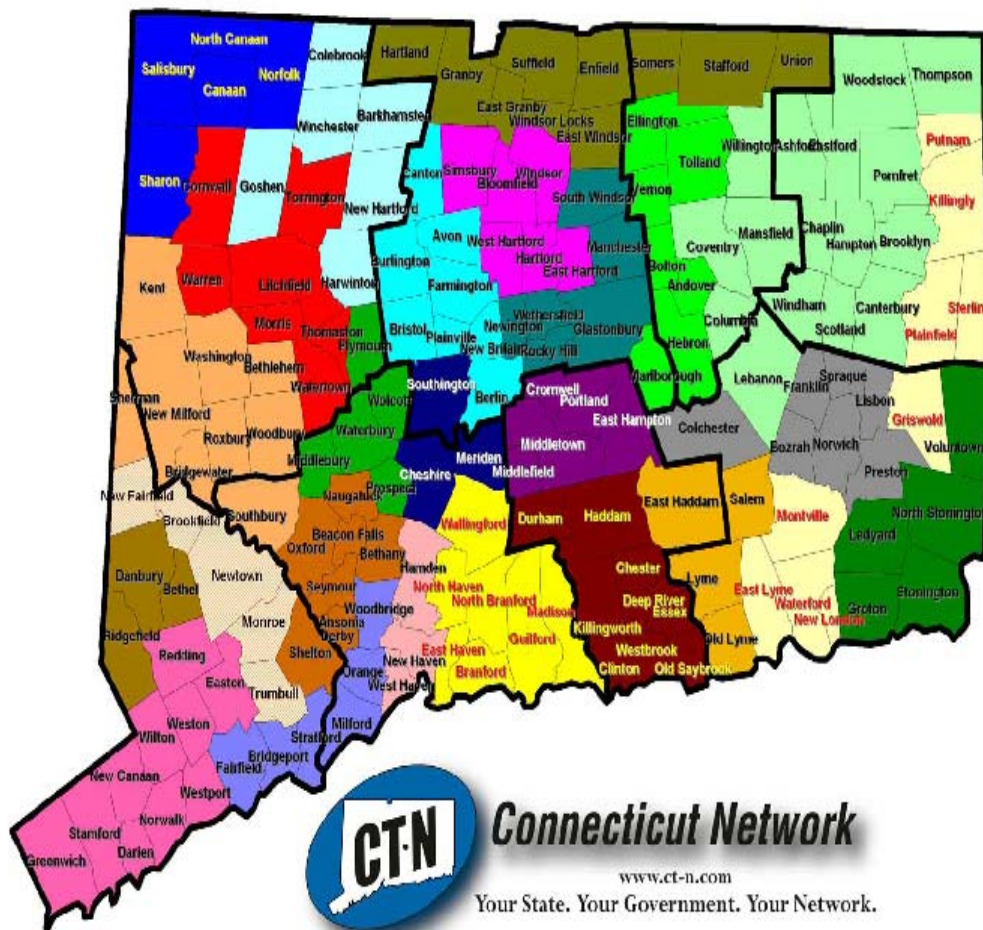
During the month of August, the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security conducted two separate hurricane drills, and CT-N played a small part in both simulations. Essentially, we did what we would've done during a real hurricane; we used our new mini-control center and robotic camera in the Armory to cover mock press briefings and display graphics like evacuation routes, shelter locations, and other crucial emergency information. While none of this went out live over CT-N, we were able to provide a secure live web stream to local town officials participating in the drill, offering them what they would've seen on our TV channel had it been an actual emergency. The experience proved to be an effective test of the new equipment, and an excellent training opportunity for both CT-N and DEMHS personnel.

While Connecticut has been lucky in recent years, the lessons of Hurricane Katrina and its effects on the Gulf Coast - followed up by the devastation caused by Rita and Wilma - have prompted a lot of circumspection about our own readiness should a hurricane strike our state. Much of that preparedness centers around communication: getting crucial and potentially life-saving information to people in a timely manner. Participating in these exercises drove home to us the magnitude of responsibility we will assume in a real emergency. Nevertheless it was a call that we could not refuse, and now having had some practice, we're feeling a little more certain that we'll be ready if and when the first real call comes.

Statewide Availability

December 20, 2005

(All channels are full-time)



Basic/Expanded Basic Cable

- Adelphia - Lyme (58)
- Adelphia - Norwich (74)
- Cablevision of Litchfield (15)
- Charter - Northeastern (15)
- Charter - Northwestern (23)
- Charter - Western (14)
- Charter - Western (19)
- Comcast - Branford (55)
- Comcast - Clinton (99)
- Comcast - Danbury (74)
- Comcast - Groton (95)
- Thames Valley (22)
- Comcast - Hartford (20)
- Comcast - Middletown (99)
- Comcast - New Haven (74)
- Comcast - Northwest (99)
- Comcast - Plainville (20)
- Comcast - Vernon (15)
- Cox - Enfield (13)
- Cox - Manchester (13)
- Cox - Meriden (13)
- Eastern CT Cable IV (23)
- Tele-Media - Western (21)

Digital Cable

- Cablevision of CT (116)
- Cablevision of Southern CT (116)
- Tele-Media - Waterbury (182)



Connecticut Network

www.ct-n.com

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Upcoming Training & Exercise

January 9—NIMS Training Orange, CT—0830 hours (no on line registration, closed class)

January 17—NIMS Training, Orange, CT—1830 hours (no on line registration, closed class)

February 1-3 - ICS/CU class, Norwalk. Online registration available, 40 seat max.

February 6-8—ICS/CU class, Danbury. Online registration available, 40 seat max.

February 28—Exercise Planning Workshop, CT fire Academy. More details to follow.

March 6-10—ICS Train the Trainer, CT Fire Academy, 30 seat max.

For training and exercise question please contact Paul Benyeda, 860-256-0849; Bob Christ, 860-256-0851; Bob Scata, 860-256-0894 or Sharon Mazzochi, 860-256-0852.

Training is critical for first responders and is readily available through the State Fire Academy, Regional Fire Schools, and the Police Officers Training Academy. First responders include Police, Fire, Public Works, Education and 911 dispatchers to name but a few.

All of the following organizations have the ability to deliver NIMS training to your police officers, firefighters, public works employees, 911 dispatchers, health workers, education staff and emergency management personnel. Training can be delivered weekdays, weekends or evenings to meet your needs. The NIMS program can be delivered in four, eight or twelve hour modules depending on the duties assigned to personnel.

You should also know that these programs are available on line at FEMA's web site:
http://www.fema.gov/tab_education.shtm

Training Facility Contact Information: call to schedule training.

Police Officers Training Council	203-238-6505
Connecticut Fire Academy	860-627-6363
Eastern CT Fireman's Training School	860-487-1105
New Haven Regional Fire Academy	203-946-6516
Wolcott Fire School	203-879-1559
Hartford County Fire School	860-828-3242
Burrville Fire Training School	860-482-7496
Valley Fire Training School	203-736-6222
Middlesex County Fire School	860-663-1308
Fairfield Fireman's Training School	203-254-4709
Stamford Regional Training Fire School	203-977-4673

All State Agencies should contact Paul Benyeda at DEMHS, 860-256-0849 to arrange training for your employees.